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Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
Centre for Applied Cross-Cultural Research

FINAL REPORT to Asian Office of Aerospace Research & Development
**RECONFIGURING THE NATION: CONTESTING HISTORY AND IDENTITY
IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD**

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September 1, 2014

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ABSTRACT

The globalizing world is bearing witness to heated contests over national identity in post-colonial states whose nation-building projects are still crystallizing. Based on the insight that we are confronted with a “second wave” of nation-building in the globalizing, post-colonial world, one which is shaping an emerging world order in which the West will have to share the stage with rising, non-Western actors, a new approach entitled Critical Junctures Theory has been developed as a consequence of funding support for this project. A Special Issue of the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations (IJIR)* on Critical Junctures Theory is now in press, including an introduction to the new theory and a pilot case study focusing on national development in Turkey, Indonesia, and New Zealand in which revisionist actors, empowered by globalizing conditions, have been attempting to reconfigure present identities and future pathways by citing the past, thus building new configurations of trust and political power. Other articles in the IJIR Special Issue examined nation-building in Singapore, the subordination of the European Union to national interests in EU nation civic and history texts, on-going ideological and dialogical confrontations in Israel and Palestine, and other topics relevant to the topic of nation-building and trust-building under conditions of globalization and societal change. Additionally, current empirical research on Indonesian national identity was funded, as well as an examination of enlightenment discourses used to manage the historical and contemporary colonization of New Zealand Māori by the British, together with a summary Handbook Chapter on colonization from the perspective of Critical Junctures Theory. Altogether, 2 articles in international journals have been accepted for publication directly funded by the grant, together with another 9 articles that use the Critical Junctures Theory developed by the grant as part of their analysis, with 2 more journal articles currently under review and a Handbook chapter in progress. A fully developed new grant proposal has been written to develop Critical Junctures Theory to the point where it can answer questions as “What causes the eruption of junctures that transform state and society? What makes a transformation “stick” (or prove fleeting)? Who are the winners and losers? How can we explain the more or less violent nature of each process and outcome? What are the implications for the historical trajectories of nation-states?”

SUMMARY

The process of nation-building, especially among young nations in the global South, is on-going and often marked by periods of disruption, in which elements of society are radically reconfigured. An investment of \$75,000USD has enabled the development of Critical Junctures Theory, a powerful new approach to integrating knowledge across micro- (individual), meso- (group, organization, national), and macro- (global, regional) levels, and encompassing quantitative and qualitative data. The utility of this approach drawing from complexity theory and dynamical systems theory is demonstrated in an 11 article Special Issue of the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* emanating from an international workshop convened in Istanbul now in press. This features an introduction to the new theory and a case study based on Turkey, Indonesia, and New Zealand as direct outputs. Additional direct outputs include new empirical data examining Indonesian national identity and monarchism in the neighboring former kingdoms of Yogyakarta and Surakarta; survey research on Turkish national identity and religious feeling in Istanbul, a discourse analysis of the enlightenment discourses used in the colonial period and the present to manage intergroup relations involving British and indigenous Māori in New Zealand, and a Handbook chapter on the power bases of historical and contemporary forms of colonization.

Both stability and change in intergroup and international relations are handled within the theoretical framework that has been developed out of a dialogue between the three main investigators, spanning the realms of social, political, and cross-cultural psychology, international relations and political science, and anthropology and sociology. As demonstrated in the Special Issue, the theory appears uniquely capable of lending insight to both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms, spanning micro- to meso- to macro-level phenomena. A brief summary of the contents of the Special Issue are provided, as well as abstracts of the other publications funded by the grant.

A grant proposal providing a detailed summary of what would be required to develop Critical Junctures Theory as a fully-fledged analytical and diagnostic system is fleshed out as the final output of this report. The authors are confident that within 5 years, and using less than \$2 million dollars we would be able to develop a theoretical system capable of both narrating and providing diagnostic insight into periods of stability and change among disparate nations in the global South where systems of governance, particularly democratic systems, are young and changing. The “killer ap” of Critical Junctures Theory according to this new proposal is to be able to a) identify potential critical junctures in developing societies in the Global South, b) provide a causal account of why we think these are likely according the historical and cross-cultural comparisons generated by the theory and the case studies it is able to organize, and c) enable analysts to select case studies for comparison, and use the theory and software inspired by it as a diagnostic tool to examine not only the possibility spaces for upcoming critical junctures, but to marshall relevant case studies that suggest the probability space for diverging historical trajectories following the hypothesized critical juncture.

Introduction

Critical Junctures Theory draws from Complexity Theory/Dynamical Systems Theory to investigate how ethnically, religiously and ideologically defined communities interact and coexist within and between states defined on the basis of Westphalian principles (i.e., as nation-states). States are theorized as dynamical political systems identified by three system parameters: 1) a symbology-systems of symbolic meaning attached to and promoted by the state, 2) an identity space- the groups and group identities that vie for legitimacy and control of state apparatuses, and 3) a set of technologies- the institutions and technological means used by the state to maintain and reproduce itself. The system is thought to be located in an international political geography that provides initial starting conditions and system constraints based on power and political geography.

The system parameters are viewed as three families of variables rather than three individual measures, and their operation is thought to be contingent upon specific actualizing conditions consistent with the philosophy of critical realism: this allows for both quantitative hypothesis-testing research and qualitative-hermeneutical work under a unified theoretical framework. The power and breadth of the new theory is illustrated by a Special Issue in press that spans historical case studies of Singapore, New Zealand, and Turkey, history textbook analyses of the European Union, interviewing the institutional role of history teachers in transmitting Estonian national identity, the transformative ideological work of biblical narratives in Israeli state-building, and right-wing ideologues in Europe mobilizing public opinion against new migrants, and several papers that illustrate how micro-level social psychological phenomena can be located within the historical trajectories of evolving states.

The key feature of Critical Junctures Theory is a conceptualization of what are the causes of the unevenness of time in modelling social change in societies. There are long periods of time when a society appears stable, and well-capable of navigating between established configurations of the systems parameters described as “attractors” in the theory. Theorists tend then to assume that phenomena they observe during these times are a reflection of some universal feature of peoples or societies. Then they get caught out but “surprises” like the Arab Spring. The theory hypothesizes that there are other times, termed “critical junctures” when a dramatic transformation of society is possible, and where the actions of institutional actors may cause a rupture with what went before. The goal of the theory is to understand this dynamic between stability and change, to be able to identify qualitative and quantitative indicators of a society entering into a period of heightened possibilities for social change, using historical data and present-day cross-cultural comparisons. It also enables policy advice on “reconfiguring the nation” in a manner that sticks- conceptualizing what would allow a critical juncture like the Arab Spring to result in a stable multiparty democracy rather than a fleeting change as was observed in much of the Middle East.

During a critical juncture, the probability space wherein there is the potential for rupture in several possible substantive arena(s) opens up (e.g. civil/military, state/society, or capital/labor relations) and then shuts down again. Often, a rupture can only be determined in historical hindsight, while at the time of the critical juncture, the analyst can only deal in possibilities for change that are actualized by the agency of institutional actors. The theory enables the analyst to provide sharper

diagnoses of the possibilities inherent in situations faced by evolving nation states by integrating across levels and between quantitative and qualitative forms of knowledge.

With funding support from AOARD, we managed three meetings of the three lead researchers, first in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, then in Istanbul, Turkey, where we also convened a workshop with a dozen colleagues that formed the basis for the Special Issue of *International Journal of Intercultural Relations (IJIR)* now in press as the centrepiece of the outputs for this grant. Finally, we meet in Auckland, New Zealand at the beginning of 2014 to finalize the new theory and the papers describing it. We there brainstormed a new, more extensive global investigation of critical junctures that will enable the development of a theoretical system and diagnostic tool capable of providing more substantial insight, bolstered by historical evidence, of how when and why particular periods of time may be identified as critical junctures, and what kinds of actions by what institutional actors are capable of shifting the probability spaces during these critical junctures.

At present, we can at best speculate based on historical evidence a limited set of current case studies. This type of hermeneutical or interpretive theorizing formed the bulk of our inaugural Special Issue introducing Critical Junctures Theory. But it is our intention to use empirical evidence, gathered from 12 big case studies using both historical and current sources of data, together with the advice and insight of country and regional experts, to fully flesh out Critical Junctures Theory as a diagnostic and an explanatory tool for understanding historical and present-day case studies of societal change in the context of not only what happened, but what could have happened if different institutional actors had adopted different courses of action. We are keen to see whether this type of interpretive exercise can be validated by quantifiable markers in their impact on a society's system parameters. The gold standard of the grant proposal is therefore to be able to collect enough historical and current data in 12 important states in the Global South and develop sufficiently refined quantified measures of the system parameters of these states that can be checked against the interpretive advice provided by area experts to be able to make predictions, and offer diagnostic advice about upcoming system stability versus instability in these nation-states. The diagnostic model provided by Critical Junctures Theory would ideally be able to also provide advice about the nature of instabilities within the system and provide the broad-brushstrokes of strategic and tactical advice to shift the probability spaces in one direction or another. The grant proposal that forms the final product of this research project details these future ambitions.

Methods, Assumptions, & Procedures

Details of the specific methods used for the papers that form the outputs of this research project may be viewed as attachments of the specific papers that were produced as a consequence of the funding.

In terms of an overview, we used a dialogical method involving the three authors of this proposal to elaborate on the nation-building framework described in the funding proposal. We met first in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in March 2013 (hosted by Dr. Mark Woodward), wherein the theoretical framework for Critical Junctures Theory was born. We continued to exchange ideas over the internet over the next few months, and a more concrete framework emerged that became fully realized in Istanbul, Turkey (hosted by Dr. Nora Fisher Onar) in May 2013, when we convened a research workshop hosted by Fisher Onar's Bahesir University inviting about a dozen or so participants from around the world. Over three intensive days of discussion, the ideas of Critical Junctures Theory became refined, and the basis for the papers that would form the core of our Special Issue were outlined.

A dozen papers for the Special Issue were delivered to us via email in October/November of 2013, and the review process for editing the SI was completed just recently, in August of 2014, when our two introductory theoretical papers, together with 9 other articles were formally accepted for publication in the well-regarded *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, to be published later this year.

The PI for this project (Liu) has also worked independently to produce a discourse analysis of Speeches from the Throne in New Zealand from 1854-1880, and also from 2000-2012 to analyse what changes in the system parameters for this country have taken place from the colonial era to the present. Details of the methods used can be seen in the attached paper, but theoretically, this paper, currently under review, is important because it demonstrated no rupture between the official discourses (symbolologies) used in the 19th and 21st centuries to manage inter-ethnic diversity in New Zealand, even though the technologies of state and the identity spaces were radically different; these changed gradually over time for the most part, however. A tentative finding to emanate from this is that Western societies have faced a differentiated set of challenges compared to non-Western societies in terms of the robustness of their technologies of the state and their ability to accommodate symbolic challenges from different identity groups. As such, while Critical Junctures Theory is in principle generalizable, its instruments – which capture dynamic if fraught contests at the nexus of state and society over national identities and trajectories - are particularly well-suited to explicating crisis and transformation in the global South.

Liu and Woodward also collected some empirical survey data in Yogyakarta that resulted in a paper submitted for publication with an Indonesian academic looking at national identity and monarchism how it might have evolved out of the different historical circumstances of the absorption of the principalities of Yogyakarta and Surakarta into the nation-state of Indonesia in the 20th century. This is currently under review at *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*.

We further collected survey data in Istanbul, but deemed this not yet ready for publication as it promises to deliver significant insights in longitudinal perspective in light of Turkey's ongoing transformation. Likewise, we conducted ethnographies and interviews in Yogyakarta that similarly have not yet yielded publishable materials.

Finally, the PI was invited to write a chapter for the *Handbook of Social Justice* on colonization, and he used Critical Junctures Theory in this account. This chapter is in final draft form at the moment. This paper was written following the final meeting of the three main investigators in New Zealand in January, 2014.

Results and Discussion

All outputs of the grant are listed below, with their full text available to the reader as attached files.

The Special Issue on Critical Junctures Theory is currently in press with *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, and will be published as the final issue of the journal in 2014. IJIR had a 2013 Impact Factor of 1.216. These are the papers in the SI in order of publication in the SI. I quote from the introduction to the SI to give the reader an idea of the contents of the articles.

From Liu, Fisher Onar, & Woodward (forthcoming):

"Articles in this Special Issue span considerable ground claimed by Critical Junctures Theory (CJT). Lim et al., and Fisher Onar et al. (this issue) provide historical case studies that are the most direct applications of the theory as an explanatory system. Lim et al. narrate the historical trajectory of the city-state of Singapore from pre-inception through to its survivalist focus on racial harmony after independence and the difficult period after expulsion/separation from the Federation of Malaya: they cite its draconian Internal Security Act *and* its meritocratic multiculturalism as emblematic technologies of state adaptive for that uncertain time. They argue that the stability of this configuration may be challenged by the new technology of social media that provides for identity spaces difficult for the state's traditional systems of authoritarian control to manage.

Fisher Onar et al. (this issue) use Mills' logic of difference to argue that evidence of revisionist forms of cultural nationalism emerging across disparate case studies (Turkey, Yogyakarta, and New Zealand) suggests convergent global processes taking place in the re-imagining of national identities in a post-colonial world. Despite manifest differences in the balance of power and political geography of these polities, CJT is used as an explanatory framework to narrate commonalities from the selective adaptation of European elements of symbology and governance in the wake of colonization to their subsequent re-imagining as more complex identity spaces in the post-colonial era. Fisher Onar et al. (this issue) argue that these developments were deeply influenced by initial conditions – the prevailing balance of power and geography in each situation.

Sakki; and Kello and Wagner's (this issue) contributions uniquely focus on the technology of state parameter that is otherwise neglected in this collection. Sakki (this issue) examines secondary school history and civics textbooks across five countries in the European Union (EU) and finds that while German and French textbooks attempt to construct a European identity space of shared values (based on economic cooperation), the textbooks still functioned as a technology of state, narrating the EU from the narrow interests of the nation-state, portraying it as an institutional bureaucracy bereft of unifying heroes or symbols that might lead the reader to form an EU emotional attachment. Substantial reservations were made about the EU in the textbooks, especially by smaller countries threatened by lack of voice and control over its bureaucracy, and by the trenchant Euroskepticism of the UK. We may conclude that at least in this domain, the EU as an attractor is subordinate to the primary attractors of European nation-states loath to surrender their sovereignty to what is viewed as a bureaucratic apparatus with merely instrumental (and not identity-based) costs and benefits.

Zeroing in on the role of the people who teach history in the post-Communist secondary schools of Estonia, Kello and Wagner (this issue) report that the teachers they interviewed managed to strike a balance between the patriotic demands of narrating national identity and the disciplinary requirements of their teaching profession that require a liberal, constructivist, and multi-perspective education. Ethnic Estonian teachers expressed the uniqueness and temporal endurance of Estonian identity. Ethnic Russian teachers compared to ethnic Estonians were more exposed to conflicts between different, inner and external, demands and expectations, and more aware of themselves as agents of the state mediating between the current regime and their Russian speaking communities. They had to cope with uncertainty more than majority group teachers, much as other minority group members in other national systems.

The next set of papers deals with symbolologies of state, or, in the case of Bobowik et al. (this issue) the larger international context within which they are actualized. Using a large multi-national dataset, Bobowik et al. (this issue) found that representations of World War II, part of the great singularity that set the stage for the dominance of nation-states as attractors in the modern era, mediated the effects of hierarchical and collectivistic values, low social development, and being victorious in WWII on willingness to fight in the next war. As students of social representations theory, Bobowik et al. (this issue) have identified part of the actualizing layer that makes nation-states so pervasive as attractors in this era: the meaning of WWII is part of the interpretive machinery that bolsters the survival of nation-states by making meaning that facilitates citizens being willing to fight for the survival of their state.

Similarly drawing from cross-national data, this time in the form of speeches by leaders of Populist Right-Wing political Parties (PRWP) in Western Europe, Mols and Jetten (this issue) show how a temporal narrative of history and identity is used to instill a feeling of collective angst and fear of loss of cultural continuity to turn voters against mainstream symbolologies of state based on liberal and multicultural ideas, and against immigrants. The discourse of a glorious past is juxtaposed against a bleak future engineered by ruling elites who have betrayed the nation and are not tough enough to fight off the corrupting influence of immigrants who threaten collective continuity and cherished cultural values. This paper demonstrates how critical junctures in the nation's past can be re-imagined by political entrepreneurs in an attempt to seize the technology of state via democratic means and redefine the identity space in favor of their right-wing agenda (see Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

Focusing on the narrative roots of symbolism for Israel, Klar (this issue) draws from ancient Biblical sources, and not so ancient interpretations of them that form the ideological basis for Jewish people's orientations through the eras to the "sacred reenactment" of their return to Israel or conversely persisting in diaspora, and their treatment of gentiles in the state of Israel. Klar (this issue) argues that "Do not arouse or awaken love", "Shivat Zion", and "Conquest of the Land" form three Biblical paradigms through which religious Jews have comprehended critical junctures in their relationship to the land of Israel and Palestine; he argues that Israeli success in the 1967 War was a critical juncture in which religious Zionists gained the confidence to set in motion political actions that make a negotiated peace in this region extremely difficult.

The final three papers are micro-level behavioral science studies using experimental methods typical of psychology that focus on identity space. Pilecki and Hammack (this issue) describe the inability of intergroup dialogue to overcome entrenched group narratives about history held by Israelis and Palestinians in an intergroup contact program held in the United States. The two groups narratively diverged on concrete issues about the future as well: “When put in concrete terms, “peace” became a matter of contention fueled by the emergence of mutually exclusive collective narratives”. This paper amplifies the conclusions of Klar’s (this issue) meso-level paper at the micro-level.

Wohl, King, and Taylor (this issue) present two experimental studies on psychological precursors of collective political action by people in diaspora. They found support for the idea that feelings of politicized collective identity (PCI) coupled with high levels of collective angst (i.e., concern for the ingroup’s future vitality) led to attitudinal support among migrants to Canada for violent political actions back in their home countries; however, PCI predicted support for peaceful protest with collective angst was low. This micro-level paper resonates with the meso-level findings of Mols and Jetten described previously: some form of collective angst appears to be a catalyst for hostile actions against an out-group.

Finally, bringing the papers full circle, Leone and Sarrica (this issue) report experimental findings on the impact of *parrhesia*, or truth-telling about a painful history dishonoring past generations (Italian war crimes against Ethiopia waged by Mussolini), on Italian youth. They found that a narrative providing a clear moral stance and precise details of historical injustices committed by the in-group (e.g., use of prohibited poison gas) elicited more emotional reactions in terms of both self-report (readers in the *parrhesia* text condition felt more angry, ashamed, infuriated and furious) and propensity for action (i.e., they were more involved, more struck and less indifferent in self-report, and showed greater unease on camera). They had much milder reactions to an evasive text describing the same historical events. Leone and Sarrica (this issue) suggest that *parrhesia* may be adapted as a technology of state to end collective silence about a shameful past and used to open up a space for reconciliation between two peoples separated by historical injustice.”

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Other outputs:

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Conclusions

Critical Junctures Theory appears to be a very promising avenue of research that provides the type of meta-theoretical framework needed to integrate area studies with more general theorizing, and for organizing results from multi-method micro-, meso-, and macro-level studies.

As a consequence, we have put together a proposal for further research funding to flesh out the framework constructed by this initial grant. Given the success of the dialogical framework we adopted for this initial venture we outline a similar structure for the bigger follow-up proposal: to convene panels of experts in 12 countries, examining the historical trajectory of these states, selected for the historical, current, or possible salience of critical junctures, their relevance to the global order, and their feasibility and data-richness in terms of furnishing high-quality outputs for the research.

The project proposes to engage a dozen cases, across major regions of the global South: in East and South East Asia, **China, Indonesia, and Thailand**; in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), **Russia and Ukraine**; in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), **Turkey, Iran, Egypt**; in Sub-Saharan Africa, **South Africa and Mozambique**; and in Latin America, **Brazil and Argentina**.

The cases are situated along a spectrum relevant to our unfolding engagement in typological reasoning. They range from clear-cut *historical* cases, to situations *in-progress* which may or may not yield radical rupture, to potential or *latent* cases of critical junctures. Some also furnish *deviant* cases to “revise, broaden, and confirm patterns emerging from data analysis” (Patton 2001) with regard to why and how critical junctures are aborted, that is, when the possibility space of a critical juncture is foreclosed (e.g. China’s Tiananmen Square, Brazil’s averted default; Iran’s Green Revolution, or Turkey’s Gezi Park protests). Also relevant to the emerging typological framework is the range of inclusive/exclusive settlements and violent/non-violent outcomes.

Some highlights of the draft grant proposal (also attached) are as follows:

Through this five-year project, we will:

- Expand the cases to 12 pivotal countries in 6 regions across the global South;
- Investigate a core set of research questions and identify further testable hypotheses pertinent to when, why, and how critical junctures emerge and their impact on country trajectories; These questions include: *What causes the eruption of junctures that transform state and society? What makes a transformation “stick” (or prove fleeting)? Who are the winners and losers? How can we explain the more or less violent nature of each process and outcome? What are the implications for national trajectories? How do such outcomes impact regional and international order? And, in light of our findings, what are appropriate response strategies?*
- Develop a typology of critical junctures that leverages case-specific expertise from both the nation’s history and relevant cross-cultural comparisons to produce theoretical generalization;

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- Apply the above toward a diagnostic tool for providing strategic and tactical advise for expert analysts looking for an edge in predicting and responding to rapid societal change in particular countries in the Global South.

In the process, we will:

- Convene 12 intensive country workshops;
- Bring together at least 36 prominent international experts while fostering a broader research team and community;
- Undertake 6 surveys in mega-cities that are microcosmic of their national contexts;
- Organize 1 mid-grant conference;
- Author and edit 2-3 books and/or special edition journals;
- Produce *ad hoc* single-author and collaborative scholarly and policy-relevant publications;
- Develop a multi-country database that collates qualitative and quantitative indicators of Critical Junctures;
- Develop a diagnostic tool for predictive modeling and for providing strategic and tactical advice for analysts.

Such a program of research would build on the foundations established here, and build the overall framework for understanding critical junctures in the life and times of nation-states, and how to leverage their possibilities in a way that leads to useful strategic and tactical advice for practitioners.